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2018 CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING	
PRATT INSTITUTE 144 West 14th Street, Room 213 New York, New York 10011	
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July 17, 2018 11:11 A.M.	
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BOARD MEMBERS:	
CESAR PERALES	
RACHEL GODSIL JOHN SIEGAL	
DEB ARCHER MARCO CARRION	
DALE HO UNA CLARKE	
WENDY WEISER ANNETTA SEECHARRAN	
MENDY MIROCZNIK	
CARLO SCISSURA	
KYLE BRAGG SHARON GREENBERGER	
LIRAN ANGELO KYLE BRAGG	
ALSO PRESENT: MATT GEWOLB - Assistant	

1	MR. PERALES: Good morning. My name is
2	Cesar Perales, and I am chair for this
3	commission. This is the New York State Charter
4	Revision Commission of 2018.
5	Let's begin, as is our custom, by asking
6	folks to introduce themselves. We will start
7	with Mr. Bragg.
8	MR. BRAGG: Good morning. I'm Kyle Bragg.
9	I'm Secretary-Treasurer of Union 32BJ. Thank
10	you.
11	MS. ANGELO: Good morning. I'm Liran
12	Angelo. I'm a senior researcher at the Institute
13	for State and Local Governance.
14	MS. GREENBERGER: Good morning. I'm Sharon
15	Greenberger. I'm the President of the YMCA of
16	Greater New York.
17	MR. SCISSURA: Good morning. Carlo
18	Scissura. President and CEO of the New York
19	Building Congress.
20	MR. PERALES: I'm Cesar Perales and I'm the
21	former Secretary of State of New York and I
22	previously had served as Deputy Mayor of New York
23	City.
24	MR. HO: Good morning my name is Dale Ho.
25	I'm a lawyer at the American Civil Liberties

1	Union.
2	MR. SIEGAL: Good morning. John Siegel.
3	I'm a lawyer in private practice, a partner in
4	the BakerHostetler law firm.
5	MR. PERALES: That's Matt Gewolb on the end,
6	who is not a member of the commission so he
7	doesn't get to introduce himself.
8	The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss
9	our preliminary report. As some of you and
10	some of you look familiar know that we've had
11	an extensive series of public hearings. We've
12	gotten hundreds of comments, we've had actual
13	hearings with experts on particular subjects, and
14	all of that has been distilled, I think quite
15	well, by the staff in the report that is being
16	published today.
17	Matt, do the folks in the audience have
18	they seen the report?
19	MR. GEWOLB: The report is available now on
20	our website.
21	MR. PERALES: It's available now on the
22	website. I've got one with actual pictures, so I
23	have an advantage.
24	Basically, where we were is at our May
25	31st hearing, we asked the staff to write up a

1	preliminary report based on the public comment
2	and the public testimony, and that's what we have
3	before us today. I want to thank the staff for
4	what I think is an excellent, excellent job, and
5	I think at this point I think it would be
6	useful if Matt were to provide us with the
7	highlights of the report.
8	With that, I give you Matt Gewolb.
9	MR. GEWOLB: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair,
10	and let me echo your thanks to the terrific staff
11	that we have, a lot of hours and great work into
12	this report. So we appreciate that very much.
13	I'm going to go through the preliminary
14	staff report now, and and hit some of the
15	highlights for all of you. Let me just say as a
16	preliminary matter, that we've carefully reviewed
17	each and every comment submitted to the
18	commission, we've examined the entire charter,
19	and through this report, we seek to achieve three
20	goals.
21	The first is to summarize the hundreds of
22	comments we've received from New Yorkers across
23	the five boroughs as well as from advocates,
24	elected officials, academics and other experts.
25	The second is to recommend specific

1	proposals for consideration, further
2	consideration by the commission on the five issue
3	areas the commission has resolved to focus on,
4	and third, to inform the public throughout the
5	issues the commission is considering and to help
6	the commission formulate valid questions for the
7	public's consideration in that matter.
8	This report is intended to be a living
9	document. It will not limit the commission's
10	consideration of other issues nor its
11	recommendations set in stone.
12	Indeed, we're now going to be beginning next
13	week another tour of the five boroughs to hear
14	from members of the public in response to this
15	report, and of course, we expect the report to
16	change and to evolve in response to public
17	comment. Next slide.
18	Here, the major focus areas. I'm going to
19	briefly summarize the report. The focus areas
20	are campaign finance, municipal elections in New
21	York City, civic engagement, community boards,
22	and the districting process. For each of these,
23	I'm going to discuss the findings of the report,
24	and then after I finish with this presentation,
25	we're going to we'll hand it back to you,

1	Mr. Chair to facilitate a discussion on these
2	points.
3	On campaign finance, the commission received
4	numerous campaign finance reform proposals,
5	mostly addressing contribution limits, the public
6	matching formula and the matching funds cap.
7	Staff recommends in this area that the
8	commission strongly consider proposing an
9	amendment reducing contribution limits,
10	strengthening the public match and increasing the
11	cap on public matching funds. The commission
12	should carefully consider whether when any
13	proposed amendments go into effect, how each
14	proposed change to the system will interact with
15	other proposed changes, how these changes will
16	affect the ability of participating and
17	non-participating candidates to run competitive
18	campaigns, and how the changes will impact the
19	cost of the program. All these are laid out
20	these issues are described in some detail in the
21	preliminary staff report, as you can imagine.
22	Municipal elections in New York City. The
23	commission received a large number of proposals
24	on how to improve elections in the City and
25	increase voter participation.

1	The proposals fell into three general
2	categories. Proposals for modernizing the
3	administration of elections such as changes to
4	voter registration processes and proposals to
5	adopt early voting. Two, proposals for increased
6	access to voting, either through direct changes
7	to voter eligibility requirements, such as
8	lowering the voting age or non-citizen voting,
9	whereby removing practical barriers by offering
10	things such as increased language assistance.
11	Three, proposals to address a lack of engagement
12	among voters. The most common proposals on these
13	lines was ranked choice voting, a system intended
14	to better capture voter preferences. Staff
15	recommends in this portion of the report that the
16	commission continue to study a range of proposals
17	to increase voter participation. In particular,
18	we recommend that the commission continue to
19	study election modernization proposals, but
20	solicit further input on which reforms might be
21	best achieved at the state level, focus on
22	proposals that address elements of election
23	systems specific to New York City, such as
24	possible rank choice voting in local primaries,
25	respond to identify needs of New Yorkers, such as

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strengthening and expanding language assistance
services, and finally, the staff recommends that
the commission consider reforms that promote
civic engagement as a means of increasing voter
participation.

Speaking of civic engagement, next slide, our next subject matter area. As you recall from our public hearings, many commenters voiced a concern about the health of the City's democracy, and offered proposals meant to promote civic engagement. The themes of the proposals frequently presented to the commission include creating an agency to coordinate and enhance the City's current efforts, all of which are described in some detail in the preliminary staff report, promote civic engagement as a continuum of opportunities for regularly participating in the civic life of the City, promote engagement that is local, community-based and culturally relevant, and better inform the public about opportunities for engagement.

So on next steps here, we recommend further study of ways to strengthen the City's efforts to engage its residents including through the possible establishment of a new entity or office,

1	and what we laid out in this slide is the
2	questions that we think we ought to hear from the
3	public on in order to better formulate a proposal
4	for a potential new office or entity.

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Our next broad subject matter is community boards. Members of the public, experts and elected officials expressed a strong interest in making the City's 59 community beards more reflective of the communities that they represent. Many of the comments we received on community boards indicated that some boards may be insufficiently diverse both demographically and ideologically, lack a consistent and centralized employment process and do not have adequate resources, particularly in urban planning but also in other areas. In response to these concerns, we recommend that the commission consider four proposals we have listed above. Consideration of proposals to impose term limits for community board members, the standardization on enhancement of the existing appointment process, additional support and resources to community boards particularly in the context of urban planning but potentially in other areas as well, and proposals to adopt other methods to

1	ensure	that	communi	ty b	oards	are	representative
2	of the	commu	nities	that	they	serv	re.

Finally, the districting process. A little
bit of background. After every decennial census
the Mayor and the City Council appoint a
15-member district and commission to draw City
council district lines to accommodate changes in
population. The next districting plan will take
effect in 2023. The commission heard a variety
of proposals relating to the process by which
district lines are drawn. Some commenters
expressed concern that the recent districting
cycle did not give due consideration to the
voting power of racial and ethnic minority
groups. Others emphasize the importance of the
independence of the districting commission and
suggested changes to the appointment process.
Finally, commenters expressed concern about the
integrity of the upcoming 2020 census, in
particular, relating to potential undercounts in
New York City. As next steps in this area, we
recommend further study of procedures to address
the effects of the districting process on racial
and ethnic minority groups. This might include
providing for an additional review of proposed

1	lines by an independent expert. The further
2	study of alternations to the structure of the
3	districting commission to promote its
4	independence and reduce the influence of elected
5	officials including possible changes to the
6	appointment process. We've seen models of this
7	and heard about them from various witnesses
8	before the commission from other jurisdictions.
9	And finally, further study strategies to
10	counteract the negative effects of an undercount
11	in the next census on the districting process.
12	That is a very fast overview of a 100-plus page
13	report, but at a high level, that's what's there.
14	Mr. Chair, before I turn it back over to you
15	for the discussion, just a couple of notes on
16	calendar and next steps for the commissioner to
17	be aware of.
18	So as as I think people know and as
19	reflected on this slide, we're about to enter
20	Charter Week next week. It's very exciting. We
21	have hearings coming up in Manhattan on
22	July 23rd, Bronx on July 24th, Queens on the
23	25th, Brooklyn on the 26th, and then finally
24	Staten Island, where we began this process on the
25	31st. And I will of course, make all the details

1	have been made public through press advisories on
2	the website, etcetera. We'll continue to
3	advertise those events. Of course, we're
4	continuing with the commission's robust outreach
5	efforts through Commissioner in Your Borough
6	events which are somewhat informal
7	community-based events to engage the public on
8	the neighborhood level. Community meetings and
9	grass-roots events, continued meetings with
10	subject matter experts, and of course, continuing
11	to take written comments from the public by mail,
12	e-mail, through our Website, and on social media.
13	The members of the public that are here, of
14	course, I hope they will continue to engage with
15	us through whatever means is most convenient.
16	And, looking ahead, August, we will hold public
17	meetings to discuss and to vote on a final report
18	and any ballot proposals. September 7th, the
19	ballot proposals, if any, are due to be filed
20	with the City clerk. That is our deadline.
21	September, then, launching a public education
22	campaign, which we'll talk about more at future
23	meetings. And then, of course, November 6th is
24	Election Day, and the public will weigh in on any
25	valid proposals that we propose.

1	So with that, I will hand it back to the
2	Chair to facilitate a discussion on each of these
3	areas, and of course, we thank the commissioners
4	for the opportunity to do this work. We're very
5	appreciative on behalf of all the staff, so
6	thanks very much.
7	MR. PERALES: Thank you, Matt. It goes
8	without saying this is a meeting of the members
9	of the commission. We will not entertain
10	comments from the public.
11	But let me begin by thanking the commission
12	members. I think just about everybody who is
13	here today has either spoken to me
14	person-to-person or has had a lengthy
15	conversation with me so that their views have
16	certainly been incorporated in the narrowing of
17	the issues that the staff has conducted. So my
18	thanks to the other members of the commission for
19	taking the time to engage with me on many of
20	these issues.
21	With that, what I want to do is sort of
22	highlight, and it may sound a little repetitive
23	but I'll do it in five seconds, each of the five
24	issue areas, and ask folks to comment. I know
25	you've commented to me personally, but some of

1	it's been done individually, and so it may be
2	useful to comment and have the other commission
3	members hear your thoughts on particular issues.
4	Let's start with one that may be the most
5	difficult, or may be the easiest; I don't know
6	which. It's campaign finance reform.
7	I think the staff has asked us to consider
8	lowering the contribution limits, increasing
9	matching funds, even increasing the cap for
10	matching funds. So we are very engaged in this
11	process, and I know we've asked the consultants
12	to do some modelling for us to see what happens
13	if you lower the contribution limits or you
14	increase the match, and we want to be sure that
15	both participating and nonparticipating
16	candidates can run competitive campaigns.
17	With that as an opening statement, are
18	any of the members of the commission want to
19	comment publicly on where we are?
20	MR. BRAGG: I would begin by saying the
21	round of hearings that have been conducted
22	throughout the City have been extremely
23	informative for me, and I dare to say for the
24	rest of the commission. The challenges that
25	exist in our electoral system about levelling the

1	playing field to allow a more open process and
2	allow people to participate in electoral process
3	in the City, in a means and a fashion that is
4	fair and equitable to all; and trying to continue
5	to remove the barriers that exist and keep
6	everyday activists and normal people who are
7	engaged in our political system, the ability to
8	run equally and fairly in the contest for
9	political office; and so without having any
10	particular determination about what is the right
11	course to pursue, I think the information that's
12	been provided to us and the information that I'm
13	sure we'll continue to get as we continue our
14	hearings will allow us to formulate a
15	recommendation that we can present to the
16	citizens of New York to make a more fair and
17	equitable process for the finance campaign.
18	MR. PERALES: I want to thank you for saying
19	that, because I almost took it for granted that
20	everybody understood that what we are hoping to
21	do is, to the extent possible, level the playing
22	field. Let the people who have less of an
23	ability to raise big money to run for office, and
24	to run for office successfully; and so in order
25	to do that, we're looking for ways of decreasing

big contributions, looking at ways of coming up with a more generous match so that if you get a small contribution, it will be multiplied and mean that much more. So these are the things that we're looking at. We have not come down on the exact dollar amounts, but that is what we hope to do as we finalize our discussions.

Any other thoughts?

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MR. SCISSURA: I just want to add a couple of things. First of all, the staff did a great job in putting together the draft report, so congrats. You know, we are living in a very flush economy -- God bless you -- everything is going great, we have a lot of money, surpluses, etcetera. Obviously, that is not going to be the case forever, so I want us to all be mindful that if we are increasing matching, there are more people than ever running for office, which is wonderful, but let's be careful of the City budget, because I would not want to be the person, and I don't think any of us would want to be the commission that added holes in budgets, you know, long term down the road. Even if it's small, it's still something, so I want us to think about that. I think it would be great, and

1	I hate to give you and your team more work to
2	present some, you know, different ideas. So if
3	you went, you know, from 175 to 250 and went 8:1
4	and lowered it from, you know, for the mayor
5	5,100 to 3,800, whatever it is, maybe you can
6	give us some different recommendations. I think
7	that would be great, and then, the other thing I
8	would say is if we're going to do changes on
9	contribution limits, it should be a percentage
10	that is going to affect every level.
11	So we shouldn't arbitrarily say for the
12	mayor it's this, for the council it's this, for
13	the borough president it's this, for controller,
14	public advocate. My opinion would be we're going
15	to say it's 20 percent, whatever the number is,
16	but it should be fair across the board; because I
17	think then it gives a very clear message that we
18	are looking at every office equally. So those
19	would be my recommendations.
20	MR. PERALES: Dale?
21	MR. HO: I would just like to say a few
22	words. First of all, I just wanted to thank the
23	staff for putting together this report under, I
24	think, very under a lot of time pressure.
25	Even with the narrow focus I shouldn't say

narrow, but even with the circumscribed focus of
the issues that we've been talking about, you can
talk about almost an infinite number of things
under the charter, but we've focused on a few
things and even within that range of things,
there's so much to do and think about, and I
think the staff has done a tremendous job of
distilling the input that we've gotten in
hearings and charting a recommended course
forward so I just want to thank you for that.

I was struck -- with respect to campaign finance -- by the fact that even though the New York City campaign finance system is frequently described as a model for the rest of the country -- and I think rightfully so -- it's a good system that is functioning well. Even with that good system, I was struck by the amount of testimony that we received from people saying that there isn't adequate access to the system for candidates of different means, that there's still feeling that the system isn't fair, that there is at least an appearance of corruption even if people aren't identifying the sort of specific corrupt incidents in New York City politics in recent years. There's an appearance

1	that pay to play is still a thing that happens in
2	our politics and that there's room for
3	improvement even in this model campaign finance
4	system that we have. It would be great, I think,
5	if we had more time to consider some of the more
6	radical proposals that have been talked about
7	around the country. Given our time constraints,
8	I think it's appropriate to think about to
9	focus our thoughts, not exclusively if in
10	upcoming hearings there's views that people want
11	to express about making more radical
12	transformations of the system, but I think it's
13	appropriate, given the amount of time that we
14	have to focus on the areas that have been talked
15	about today, specific to the contribution limits,
16	the amount of matching funds, and then the cap or
17	matching funds. I think there's always room for
18	improvement in those areas to help improve the
19	appearance of our elections. Thank you.
20	MR. PERALES: John?
21	MR. SIEGAL: So in the area of campaign
22	finance where I've litigated and represented
23	campaigns extensively, I've been very impressed
24	by the detail and sophistication of the
25	discussion. Not just the staff presentation,

1	which we expect because the staff, largely on
2	loan from the law departments at a very high
3	level, but also the discussion among
4	commissioners and particularly the presentation
5	of advocates where I think the discussion as
6	you've laid it out and the decision tree that we
7	have is really shows a sophisticated
8	understanding among the participants in this
9	debate.
LO	I do think that we have to be mindful of the
11	larger environment that we are dealing with and
12	not just be in a New York City bubble, given the
L3	changes that have happened just this month or are
L4	happening now in the Supreme Court of the United
L5	States, that anything we do in this area is on a
16	it's regulating on a on a difficult and
17	changing playing field; and that while we can
L8	among ourselves get into a debate about
L9	proposals, all of which really are quite

Amendment rights of New Yorkers who participate

that has a 50 percent impact on the First

significant if not radical. I mean, talking

about cutting the contribution level -- limit by

50 percent is a very, very, very significant step

in politics, and can only be justified by a

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really compelling anticorruption rationale; and
so we've got to remain mindful of that, because I
don't think anyone here wants to go into the 2021
election cycle with campaign finance changes that
are in litigation, subject to uncertainty. We
need to make sure we get this right on a legal
basis, and I think it would be helpful to hear
more from the staff about just what room we have
to regulate on contribution limits, expenditure
limits, etcetera, so that we make sure we get it
right.

MR. PERALES: Let me just make one point before I ask Sharon to make her point. There's been a lot of discussion about the appearance of corruption, and you -- both you and Dale raised that there is of utmost concern to all of us as we examine this question, but we're also aware of the fact that we've got some Supreme Court decisions that would ask us to balance what the Supreme Court has found to be an expression of freedom of expression with being engaged and being involved in the contributions. So those two things are uppermost in our minds. We're concerned about the appearance of corruption, but we don't want to limit anybody's freedom of

1	expression as the Supreme Court has described it.
2	Sharon?
3	MS. GREENBERGER: Yes, thank you. I also
4	want to just thank the staff for putting together
5	such a comprehensive report. This has been a
6	real education for me, which relates to my point
7	around sequencing. So as we think about these
8	things, and I know it's not something we're going
9	to decide today, but I think as we look at each
10	of these areas and we think about what are the
11	implications for rollout and what our
12	recommendations on sequencing that rollout,
13	whether for the next election or a midterm piece
14	it's something we should, I think, look at for
15	each one of these, just to make sure we're not
16	inconsistent, or whether there are
17	inconsistencies to understand the rationale for
18	doing so.
19	MR. PERALES: With that this took a
20	little longer than I thought it would. We have,
21	obviously, great interest in campaign finance
22	reform.
23	The second major issue is described as
24	municipal elections in New York City. I think of
25	it as increasing voter participation. It's

1	basically the same thing, in that there were two
2	recommendations that the staff asked us to look
3	at. One was the question of grant choice voting
4	or instance runoffs, and the other was improving
5	voter assistance services, and we heard testimony
6	about the need for better language assistance.
7	Any thoughts from the commission members on
8	these two?
9	MR. SCISSURA: I would just add that I've
10	been very intrigued consistently by instant
11	runoff elections, and I would say that, Matt,
12	that would be something we've heard at many
13	hearings. I know that we've talked about that
14	maybe we should spend a little extra time on as
15	we move forward.
16	MS. GREENBERGER: I was just I am also
17	equally intrigued. I know you mentioned, Matt,
18	that it's intriguing, in part because it captures
19	voter preferences. One of the reasons I'm
20	particularly intrigued by it is because it seems
21	to be an added efficiency if we can reduce an
22	additional election or turnout, I think that that
23	would be something very worthy.
24	MR. PERALES: Dale?
25	MR. HO: I know that we received a lot of

1	testimony about various election administration
2	issues around, say, voter registration and also
3	testimony about voter qualifications such as age
4	and citizenship. I know that those are not being
5	highlighted as areas that we are going to focus
6	on or recommended to focus on necessarily going
7	forward, I think my understanding, anyway, is due
8	in part to legal limitations on the authority of
9	the City to act in those areas absent revisions
10	to either the state constitution or state
11	statutes, and I understand those concerns. I
12	would still, I think, be interested in hearing
13	testimony on those issues to the extent that this
14	commission can stake out a position on various
15	issues within our legal authority or even make
16	recommendations that might go to future statute,
17	state statutory changes, that's one thing; and I
18	guess I would also say there are items like the
19	voter registration deadline that I know are
20	prescribed by the state constitution, but to the
21	extent that there's any plans for the joints to,
22	for purposes of municipal elections, make some
23	changes in that area, it's something that I would
24	be interested in hearing a little bit more about.
25	MR. PERALES: Kyle?

1	MR. BRAGG: Kyle Bragg. So I failed to
2	recognize and thank the incredible staff that has
3	been doing this work through this process by this
4	commission, not only managing the work of the
5	commission but helping to manage the volunteer
6	commissioners, and do the best they could to
7	allow for participation and availability through
8	this process; and I think most of the points that
9	I wanted to make are already made by Dale, but I
10	would only add that we've heard testimony too.
11	I'm not quite sure how responsive we can be
12	through the commission on issues like language
13	access during municipal elections, and so I found
14	that to be a very compelling issue, and if
15	there's ways we could address that, I thought
16	that was something we would like our staff
17	professionals to guide us on, as well as voting
18	access. And so I think those were some very
19	compelling testimonies and and presentations
20	given to the commission; and I suspect I
21	expect that we will hear more in the coming
22	hearings as we do the second round of tours
23	around the boroughs. And again, rely heavily on
24	our staff professionals to guide us through those
25	deliberations. Thank you.

1	MR. PERALES: I'm ready to move on, but I
2	too want to indicate that this is going to be a
3	tough one. This is as Dale points out, we
4	have to see how far we can go given that so much
5	of election administration is controlled by state
6	statute, state constitution, and what it is that
7	we might be able to do in that area. We're going
8	to heavily rely on our lawyers to tell us where
9	we can go, and with that, I think we also need to
10	continue to discuss rank-choice voting. It's a
11	very complicated issue, and I can tell you that
12	just you may have felt that there is not
13	unanimity on the part of this commission on some
14	of these issues. That is one in which there is
15	clearly no unanimity. Liran?
16	MS. ANGELO: Thank you. Rank-choice voting
17	is intriguing, and it is interesting, and it
18	does, in fact, end up giving you one less runoff
19	than you might otherwise have had, but I think
20	that, you know, we always need to be mindful of
21	unintended consequences, particularly in
22	something very new and very different. And I was
23	struck by the political science professor from
24	Hofstra whose initial statement on rank-choice
25	voting is what problem are you looking to solve,

1	and while I agree, especially as a budget person
2	that the second, you know, the second runoff
3	always costs money, there are some things you are
4	probably just better off paying for. So I would
5	I would like to see a little bit more data on
6	the benefits of rank-choice voting, and some
7	notion of what the unintended consequences may
8	be. And you're right, we're not unanimous.
9	MR. PERALES: You've made the point clearly.
10	With that I think we should move on, and again,
11	we're going to engage in a discussion of an issue
12	that, again, we do not have what I would call a
13	unanimity of opinion. It's got to do with how we
14	would strengthen the City's efforts to engage its

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we're going to engage in a discussion of an issue that, again, we do not have what I would call a unanimity of opinion. It's got to do with how we would strengthen the City's efforts to engage its residents in setting policy and engaging in our democracy in a more active way. Much of the testimony seemed to suggest that the City ought to create a new office, an Office of Civic Engagement. Even though we also heard that there was a great deal of activity on the part of the City of New York. We got an officer that's disabled that testified, we know a very strong office that deals with immigrant affairs, voter assistance operation, a strong volunteer office, so that it's a little bit complicated as to

Τ	whether or not you put all of that under one
2	office, whether or not you are better
3	coordinated, and for that reason, I think staff
4	has recommended that we study ways to do this.
5	Any other commission members want to weigh
6	in on this point, just give us an overall sense
7	of where they think we ought to be going?
8	MR. SCISSURA: Just a quick comment. I'm a
9	fan of less bureaucracy. So creating an
10	additional office would not be something I would
11	enjoy seeing. I mean, I hate to give you more
12	work, but you guys are already doing civic
13	engagement, and I think the Chair, your comments
14	are right on point. There are a lot of different
15	offices. Maybe it's our job to help coordinate
16	them better, but just to add another office would
17	not be on my Top Ten.
18	MR. CARRION: Well, first, I should start
19	off by thanking the staff for their great work.
20	Just to echo what both Carlo and what the Chair
21	have said, I think everyone on the commission is
22	in favor of increased civic engagement, but that
23	we would need to drill down on. Obviously, the
24	concern of increased of bureaucracy is something
25	that we would have to discuss, and we want to

1	make sure that whatever we do
2	MR. PERALES: While you're on the
3	microphone, please introduce yourself.
4	MR. CARRION: My name is Marco Carrion. I'm
5	currently Commissioner in Community Affairs for
6	the City of New York.
7	MR. SIEGAL: John Siegal. So I've listened
8	to this discussion on civic engagements very
9	interesting I'm several decades away from
LO	having worked in City government, and the issue
11	of what office is situated where in the
12	bureaucracy is a theoretical concern, but not
13	something I have a direct view on or interest in
L4	at this point. As I've listened, the one very
L5	tangible, meaningful, specific thing I've heard
16	is the discussion of participatory budgeting,
17	which to me is the one thing we've heard that is
18	not only new and different, but really promises
L9	to engage communities and citizens in meaningful
20	government decision making that will affect their
21	communities and their lives in a very specific
22	way, and I'd like if, in the next month as we're
23	discussing this, if we could see proposals that
24	speak directly to sort of the implementation of
25	that, proposed mandating of it on a city-wide

1	basis, where the funds would come from, how much
2	funds, how they would be administered, how
3	communities and citizens would be organized to do
4	that. One way, of course, is to create an office
5	and leave to that office to figure out over time,
6	but I think it makes sense for us to look very
7	specifically at the implementation of that and
8	consider whether it makes sense.
9	MS. GREENBERGER: I would agree with that,
10	as someone who has had the benefit of
11	participating in participatory budget in my
12	district. It is important because it offers two
13	things, education and responsibility, which is
14	really at the root of what we're trying to get at
15	when we talk about civic engagement, and part of
16	the reason why I think it's been successful is
17	because it's been a grass-roots effort. And so I
18	agree with Carlo on figuring out where we can
19	leverage our existing resources and our existing
20	practices before we think about establishing
21	additional bureaucratic measures. I think that's
22	an important thing to consider.
23	MR. PERALES: Kyle?
24	MR. BRAGG: So I agree with both my fellow
25	commissioners on those points. I would only add

1	that the most thing the thing that most
2	excited me about that discussion was how do we
3	how do we build or continue to build youth
4	engagement. The participatory budgeting process,
5	which allowed for young adults and teenagers to
6	be engaged I think is really appropriate I put
7	here, early engagement helps develop the muscle
8	of civic engagement. I think that was really
9	appropriately worded, that we have to be very
10	deliberate about how we engage our youth so that
11	we can build our civic muscle and get the next
12	generation engaged in society.
13	And so, hearing many a lot of testimony
14	about that, I'm very excited with the
15	possibilities that we can come at and figure out
16	how we build that muscle, how do we get our youth
17	more engaged in the process and and and
18	politics and civic engagement in the City.
19	So I concur with my fellow commissioners on
20	that point.
21	MR. PERALES: Very good. In fairness,
22	because we do have a few missing commissioners,
23	even though, let me note for the record, that we
24	do have a quorum, the there are some folks
25	that liked the idea of creating a new entity so

1	that we clearly need to continue to engage on
2	this issue, and come to this conclusion, but I do
3	agree that just about everybody liked the concept
4	of expanding participatory budgeting, that is
5	that was pretty clear in my conversations with
6	all of my commission members.
7	Moving on, and it sort of flows through this
8	because we kept some folks alluded to how we
9	would do something like that, I want to talk
LO	about community boards, which might be a vehicle
11	for managing some of this increased civic
L2	engagement.
L3	For particular staff recommendations, term
L4	limits, the appointments process, providing
L5	additional resources, particularly in regards to
L6	urban planning, and the last is ensuring that the
L7	community boards are representative of the

MR. CARRION: I guess I'll start off.

communities that they serve. Any reaction to

these four recommendations by staff?

You know, I got to say I was actually very surprised by the amount of testimony we heard regarding community boards, which showed -- even though most of the testimony had been critical, I mean, the fact that folks that came to testify in

1	front of the commission meant that they
2	considered community boards to be important to
3	the democracy of the City; and I think that what
4	the staff laid out is a very good starting point
5	as we look to, I guess, speak to those criticisms
6	and the concerns that we heard regarding
7	community boards, both in the representation and
8	to make them more democratic to empower community
9	boards, to increase their responsibility; and I
10	think that this is definitely something that I
11	would be interested, and I'm going to be
12	interested in discussing further.
13	MR. SCISSURA: So I this is something
14	that is very near and dear to my heart. And I
15	think I mentioned that I oversaw the community
16	board process for five years in Brooklyn. I love
17	each of these four, and I really hope that we
18	can, together, come to an understanding that this
19	can really reshape how communities look and make
20	them look exactly how people live there and are
21	there. I think that's amazing.
22	I'll just add one thing. On Number Two, I
23	would also have some sort of standardized process
24	for hiring the district managers across the City,
25	because each community board kind of does it in a

L	different way, but if we're going to standardize
2	picking members, let's have some sort of
3	procedure or something on the district managers
1	as well.
5	MS. GREENBERGER: Can I just add something

MS. GREENBERGER: Can I just add something to that around the standardization, which I am interested in and in favor of, but I think you always have to think about, if you have standardization where is the accountability for it? Where does that sit and what does that look like? And if it's increased transparency, how are we measuring that, and I think it's something we could look at a little more in the coming weeks.

MR. SCISSURA: One thing that would confuse boards is many of them don't understand their relationship. I'm talking about the district manager and staff, their relationship to CAU and then their relationship to the borough presidents, and if we can clarify exactly that, who reports to whom, what the lines are, are they straight lines, are they dotted lines, you know, some borough presidents wind up doing HR for community boards, some don't. It's a very confusing thing. So it would be great to have a

$1 \hspace{1cm}  ext{conversation about th}$

MR. PERALES: I am pleased. There seems to be much more unanimity of opinion when it comes to community boards, and I think the idea is that we've got to find a way to, perhaps, get some stuff on our ballot that's going to make a difference about how community boards work and how community boards can be used to increase the democracy in our City. And so I'm glad we've got some consensus on community boards.

The last issue that we need to think about is one that not all of us thought would be of such interest, just as Marco was surprised by the interest in community boards by the public, I was surprised by the concern about redistricting and the fact that one of the largest growing communities in our City, the Asian community, both including the south Asian community don't think that the lines were fairly drawn. And this raised a whole issue of the fact that there would no longer be Department of Justice oversight over the drawing of lines by the City Council, which, in essence, they have the majority of the board that does the actual drawing of lines.

Does anybody have any thoughts, comments?

1	Dale?
2	MR. HO: I, too, was struck by the number of
3	comments we had about redistricting, and in
4	particular, concerns of members of the
5	Asian-American community that to the effect
6	that they felt that their voting power as a
7	community had been diluted in the last
8	redistricting cycle and that there were, perhaps,
9	inadequate safeguards in place. You know, the
10	demise of the federal preclearance regime under
11	the Voting Rights Act is obviously a problem
12	around the country, although I will note that it
13	existed in 2010, and notwithstanding the
14	existence of federal preclearance at that time;
15	we still got a redistricting plan which produced
16	results that led to at least some level of
17	dissatisfaction from some of the witnesses that
18	we heard. I haven't studied the redistricting
19	plan closely enough in detail to speak, I think,
20	intelligently about whether or not, in fact, it
21	is problematic, but given the concerns that we
22	did hear, I am interested in hearing a little bit
23	more in terms of concrete proposals that might

make our redirecting process one that is more

inclusive, and also, is more likely to produce

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results that, notwithstanding the great diversity
that we have of the City Council, can do better
in reflecting the diversity of the City as a
whole, and to that extent, I would invite members
of the community who might participate in future
public hearings to the extent that they have
ideas in this regard to propose specific
measures. So not simply to articulate concerns,
but to speak about proposals that could address
those concerns, and to make sure there is a match
between those things that might potentially give
more voters of color an opportunity to elect
their preferred candidates, and one path that I
might suggest would be the voting rights the
state voting rights acts that have been passed in
California and in Washington State, that might
serve as a model or a set of ideas for how we
might do a better job in that area.
Now, those two state voting rights acts were
limited specifically to contexts where local
elections are conducted at large, but there was
an amendment to the California one in 2014 by the
man who is now the Secretary of State of

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California, Alex Padilla, that would extend the

protections of the California voting rights act

1	to cities that currently have district-based
2	elections; and I would be interested I'm not
3	advocating that at this time but I would be
4	interested in hearing proposals in that regard.
5	MR. SCISSURA: I would add one of the things
6	that's been bandied about for years and something
7	that has always interested me, and I know we
8	heard some testimony about it, is the idea of
9	co-terminus community boards with council
10	districts. It would obviously mean increasing
11	the council by probably six or seven individuals,
12	but you do have community boards of police
13	precincts called terminus. There have been
14	articles about I guess it was in the '60s,
15	that there was a push to do co-terminality across
16	the City. Worth looking at as we look at
17	community boards and districting processes,
18	because there might be some connection.
19	Again, I'm not advocating either way, but I
20	think it's a worthwhile investment of time.
21	MR. PERALES: Liran?
22	MS. ANGELO: There's also the problem of the
23	health districts, the fire districts, and it does
24	make it very hard for anyone on the community
25	boards to kind of wrap their mind around, you

Τ	know, like, my fire district, my health district,
2	it becomes very difficult. So if there's any way
3	to make everything co-terminus, it would probably
4	be good.
5	MR. BRAGG: I would just add that this is a
6	very important issue for our City. I don't think
7	politicians or governments should be deliberately
8	marginalizing the voice of any community. And so
9	whatever that answer is, I think we should dig
10	deep enough to unpack it so we can figure out the
11	best route to allowing all communities to have an
12	equal voice in government.
13	MR. PERALES: Sharon?
14	MS. GREENBERGER: Yes, I would only add to
15	Dale's point around asking for more specificity.
16	This question of ensuring independence on that
17	redistricting group is one that's intriguing but
18	I don't fully understand it, and so really
19	understanding what are the alternatives that
20	would generate increased independence, what do we
21	mean by that, and what does that look like I
22	think needs a little work.
23	MR. PERALES: Yes, I think we've all been
24	intrigued I think that's the word some of you
25	folks are using at the idea of improving the

1	redistricting process, but we need to see what
2	alternatives are available to us that will make
3	sense in New York City, and so I agree with
4	having this as one of the issues that we focus on
5	over the next several weeks. But I think what
б	I've heard is that there is not unanimity of
7	opinion on many of these issues. I've got, in
8	the back of my head, a clock that is ticking, I
9	know that there's an election soon, and so I
10	think we're going to have to really focus, take
11	advantage of every minute and try to get to
12	consensus on at least some of these issues so
13	that we can agree to put something on the ballot
14	that will improve democracy in our City.
15	I assume we're all in agreement?
16	(Yes).
17	Matt, any last minute thoughts?
18	MR. GEWOLB: (Head-nod).
19	MR. PERALES: No? Then I will entertain
20	oh, you've got a last-minute
21	MR. BRAGG: I just wanted to mention that
22	recently we had the opportunity to hear from New
23	York City veterans. It was an amazing discussion
24	that took place at the Pride Museum, and a lot
25	of, I think, poignant ideas and suggestions came

out of that discussion, and hope to further that
and share, you know, the outcome of that meeting
with the other commissioners who were unable to
attend.

MR. PERALES: Great. Thank you. Which just leaves one thought before I turn to you, Dale, is that we've done enormous outreach. I'm very proud of the fact that this commission has probably held more hearings, met with more people and entertained more comments than any other prior charter revision commission.

Dale?

MR. HO: I just wanted to add one comment, and that is just an expression of gratitude to members of the community who have testified at all of our hearings including to people who have testified on issues that don't fall into the five major buckets of issues that we have talked about and focused on today. Those comments are appreciated. The concerns that people have raised about other issues that could be addressed potentially through the City charter or otherwise, we take seriously. I know I take them seriously, I think I speak for everyone on the commission that we take those seriously. The

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fact that we have a limited amount of time and a
limited focus shouldn't be read in any way or
understood in any way as a lack of concern about
the other issues, and I commend the staff for
summarizing some of those issues in the report
and again, just thank folks for bringing those
issues to our attention and to the attention of
the public.

MR. PERALES: Given that, again, that's something else that triggered in my mind. The reality is that we're going to write a report, and that report will not be limited to ballot initiatives. We -- I think I have a responsibility to lay out issues that we could not finalize, decide upon, but that ought to be either addressed by the City Council or by another charter commission. We go out of existence on Election Day, but I know the City Council has already gotten a commission that is beginning to work, perhaps not on these issues, but we might give them some guidance and the mayor can, at any time, appoint another commission. So given your point, Dale, I think it's important that the public understand that while we cannot address all of the issues that we

1	think are important, there are subsequent			
2	meetings that do that.			
3	With that, I will entertain a motion.			
4	MR. BRAGG: Motion to adjourn.			
5	MR. PERALES: Did I get a second from you,			
6	Carlo?			
7	MR. SCISSURA: Yes, sir.			
8	MR. PERALES: All those in favor?			
9	(A series of ayes.)			
10	MR. PERALES: All apposed? Hearing none, we			
11	are adjourned.			
12	(Whereupon, at 12:10 P.M., the above matter			
13	concluded.)			
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1	CERTIFICATE
2	
3	STATE OF NEW YORK )
4	: SS.: COUNTY OF NASSAU )
5	
6	I, KEVIN HAGHNAZARI, a Notary Public for and
7	within the State of New York, do hereby certify:
8	That the above is a correct transcription of my
9	stenographic notes.
10	I further certify that I am not related to any
11	of the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and
12	that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this
13	matter.
14	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
15	this 19th day of July 2018.
16	
17	Mein Hastrucii
18	KEVIN HAGHNAZARI
19	KEVIN HAGHWAZAKI
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